

## **Executive Summary**

San Luis Obispo County is located on the Central Coast of California approximately halfway between San Francisco and Los Angeles. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection provides fire protection for State Responsibility Areas and as the County Fire Department protects most unincorporated areas within the County. In addition CDF/San Luis Obispo County Fire Department provides fire protection under contract for the City of Pismo Beach, the Community of Los Osos and the town of Avila Beach.

The County encompasses 2.1 million acres of which 1.5 million are protected by CDF/San Luis Obispo County Fire. County population is approximately 250,000. CDF/SLO County Fire provides protection to 61,000 people in the unincorporated areas including Los Osos and Avila Beach and 8000 people in the City of Pismo Beach. Located within the direct protection area are Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant, San Luis Obispo County Airport, Hearst Castle, and Camp San Luis Obispo—home of the California National Guard, Tosco Oil Refinery and the Hartford Ocean Pier Complex.

CDF/County Fire has identified wildland fires as a risk to residents of San Luis Obispo County. To mitigate this risk, CDF/County Fire initiated a Fire Management Plan in 1999. This plan is updated yearly and its goals are to:

- 1) Increase the safety to residents and firefighters during wildland fires
- 2) Reduce the costs and losses associated with wildland fires

The Fire Management Plan is a dynamic living document, responding to ever changing environmental and social conditions. The Fire Management Plan utilizes the following strategies to accomplish the goals listed above:

- 1) Collaboration with Stakeholders
- 2) Risk Assessment of Wildland Urban Interface Areas (WUI)
- 3) Development of an Action Plan
- 4) Monitor Effectiveness of programs and projects

There are numerous stakeholders involved in mitigating the risk from wildland fires. Focused and coordinated collaboration is very important. CDF/County Fire is an active participant in the San Luis Obispo County Community FireSafe Council (SLOFSC) and instrumental in its formation and continued success. The primary objective of the council is to provide education, exchange of information and foster fire prevention and fire safety within the County of San Luis Obispo. The SLOFSC is made up of a board of directors who represent the main stakeholders who are affected by wildland fires. The SLOFSC gives CDF/County Fire a unique opportunity to work with other agencies in solving wildland fire related issues. CDF/County Fire also works directly with homeowners during our yearly hazard reduction inspection program. CDF/County Fire staff will also have many opportunities to work with residents, homeowners associations, and other governmental agencies during the preparation of Community

and Rural Area Wildland Fire Protection Plans throughout 2005-2006. These plans are being initiated to deal specifically with the risks involved with these communities.

CDF/County Fire staff also performs a comprehensive "Risk Assessment". Risk is assessed at the county, community and individual home level. For the countywide analysis, CDF/County Fire staff utilizes the CDF "Assets at Risk Assessment". This assessment utilizes Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to determine areas of high, medium and low assets at risk. This assessment is based on the best available data. Since the accuracy of some of the base data is not complete, a continued analysis will be necessary in the future. Because of these limitations we augmented the assessment with expertise from field Battalion Chiefs. The Battalion Chiefs were able to identify additional areas and the final product is a list of target areas needing mitigation to reduce the risks. This year staff will begin conducting individual community assessments during the preparation of the Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP's). Lastly, we will continue to conduct our annual hazard reduction inspection program to provide corrective measures to individual home owners to better protect themselves.

CDF/County Fire will implement the action plan portion of this document to mitigate risks associated with wildland fires at three levels, at the county, community and individual level.

- At the county level, CDF/County Fire prevention staff will work with program level fire prevention practices such as reviewing, implementing and enforcing our fire prevention codes aimed at reducing structural ignitability, providing structured community fire prevention education programs, and developing fuel treatment projects.
- At the community level, CDF/County Fire staff will be developing specific projects to mitigate hazards identified in the Community Wildfire Protection Plans.
- At the individual level, CDF/County Fire staff will educate the public on specific measures to reduce risk during the hazard reduction inspection process.

CDF/County Fire has and will continue to monitor fire prevention projects for their effectiveness. Monitoring enables CDF/County Fire staff to determine if specific projects met their objectives and were financially cost effective and what future efforts are required.

Through a comprehensive risk analysis, a focused action plan, collaboration and monitoring, CDF/County Fire has developed this Fire Management Plan that will reduce the costs and losses associated with wildland fires and minimize risk to firefighters and residents in San Luis Obispo County. There are however many challenges that must be overcome for the plans success. They include, acquiring accurate data for the Asset at Risk Assessments, obtaining and administering grant funding for projects and an overwhelming need for GIS support at the local level. CDF/County Fire personnel will continue to look for solutions to these issues.